

REMARKS

In reply to the Office Action of March 3, 2005, independent claims 1, 5 and 7 have been amended. In addition, new claims 9-13 have been added.

Applicant's Claimed Invention is Not Unpatentable as Obvious in light of Barrick in view of Suzuki

Claims 1-8 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Barrick in view of Suzuki. The office action states that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify Barrick in view of Suzuki to create a system with all of the limitations disclosed in this application. Applicant believes that revised claim 1 is not obvious in light of Barrick in view of Suzuki, because the combined disclosures of both references do not teach all limitations of the present applications, and the differences between the combined teachings of the two references and revised claim 1 are not so slight as to be obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art.

Barrick discloses a method for substation bus bar monitoring using a number of distributed data acquisition blocks connected to a network hub through fiber-optic cable. The network hub is further connected to a data processing module. The data acquisition blocks use a 16-bit A/D converter to generate digital samples, which are then sent over the fiber-optic network to the data processing module. The data processing module uses an embedded DSP to analyze the transmitted line parameter data and determine if a fault has occurred. If a fault has occurred, a trip signal is sent to a circuit breaker, thereby protecting the monitored bus bar, or an alarm is sounded.

Suzuki discloses a redundant substation protection and control system using a group of

data acquisition units (DAU), control units (CU), and protection units (PU). DAUs interface to analog data acquisition points, which are presumably analog line parameters, and convert the analog signals to digital representations. PUs provide protection for different types of power equipment. CUs record events, provide an automatic synchronization function, and transmit measurement and control information to a substation computer installed in the control house. All connected groups of DAUs, PUs, and CUs are connected with a fiber-optic network to a star coupler. In addition, each star coupler is connected to a remote “Station CPU,” and an event recorder.

Neither Barrick nor Suzuki teaches the use of an input/output module connected to status points. Rather, both teach data acquisition devices connected directly to different line measurement devices, such as current transformers and voltage transformers. Both Barrick and Suzuki contemplate the conversion of analog line parameters to digital format in the data acquisition devices, which are connected to the fiber-optic network either directly or through a protection unit. Therefore, both Suzuki and Barrick teach the direct monitoring of line parameters.

Contrarily, revised claim 1 of the present application teaches the use of wire connections for providing status indications from selected status points connected to input contacts of an input/output module. In the system of claim 1, separate devices monitor line parameters and convert them into “status indications,” which are output by the separate devices and connected with wire connections to the input/output module.

As the combined teachings of Barrick and Suzuki do not teach such a configuration, and it would not be obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to create such a configuration in light of Barrick and Suzuki, reconsideration and allowance of all pending claims is respectfully

requested. As claim 1 is the only independent claim in the application, should the examiner find it allowable, the remaining dependent claims should be allowed as well.

CONCLUSION

This response fully addressed all matters raised in the outstanding office action. As none of the prior art renders claim 1 unpatentable as amended, and the remaining claims are all dependent, applicant respectfully requests the examiner to allow the application as amended.

Should the examiner be of the opinion that further amendments or response is required; Applicant encourages the examiner to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number set forth below.

Although no additional fees are believed to be due at this time, the Commissioner is authorized to charge any additional fees or deficiencies or credit any overpayments Cook, Alex, McFarron, Manzo, Cummings & Mehler, Ltd., Deposit Account No. 50-1039 with reference to attorney docket number (1444-0085).

Respectfully submitted,

COOK, ALEX, McFARRON, MANZO,
CUMMINGS & MEHLER, LTD.

By: 

David Mundt, Reg. No. 41,207

200 West Adams Street, Suite 2850
Chicago, Illinois 60606

(312) 984-0144 (Telephone)
(312) 984-0146 (Facsimile)